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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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November 30)

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SUBJECT: "FORTNIGHTLY FOOD SHOPPING TIPS." Information from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and the Consumers' Counsel, U.S.D.A.

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Once again the news is for the housewife who does the family marketing. Once again here are notes direct from the U.S. Department of Agriculture on the supplies and prices of seasonal foods.

A sudden snowstorm before Thanksgiving can make a lot of difference in the turkey picture. As you know, that's what happened recently. A severe storm hit some of the important turkey-raising States of the Midwest and Rocky Mountains. The cold wave killed many turkeys and held up shipments going to market. Result-- the price of turkeys went up. And the turkey crop for 1940 no longer ranked as the largest on record. After the storm the count showed the turkey crop for 1940 to be smaller than the turkey crop for '39. Even so, this year's crop gets the honors for being the second largest on record and considerably above average.

The wholesale price of turkeys advanced 2 cents a pound the middle of November. On November 14 wholesale prices of young toms weighing 14 to 18 pounds were about the same as a year ago. But wholesale prices of young hen turkeys were a cent a pound higher. Before the storm prices of both toms and hens were lower than a year ago. Hen turkeys have gone up more in price than toms. The difference in the price per pound of hens and large toms is still larger than usual.

From news of turkeys let's turn to news of other poultry, and eggs, and meat. Less poultry, fewer eggs and higher prices is the picture briefly as it looks just now. You remember that the hatch this past spring was small. Present supplies show

it. But more poultry is coming to market these days, and will continue to come until the high point of marketing in December. Fewer eggs have been going to market recently. November is the month supplies of eggs are usually lowest and prices highest. In December more eggs come on the market, and prices usually start going down some.

That's all the news of poultry and eggs. But here are a few notes on meat. The meat picture looks about the same as it did 2 weeks ago. Supplies of beef and pork and lamb will be about the same as last year. More pork will be coming to market during December, and less beef and lamb. Usually the price of meat drops during the last 2 months of the year. This year prices may not drop as much as usual.

Now from news about meat let's turn to news about vegetables. Fresh vegetables probably will be more plentiful than they were last fall and winter. And prices will be lower than a year ago.

During the winter the hardy vegetables on the market--vegetables like cabbage, and onions, and potatoes come from storage warehouses in the northern States. The tender vegetables, such as fresh peas and green beans, come from States in the South and Far West where vegetables will grow in the fall and winter. This winter the storage warehouses have more hardy vegetables than they had a year ago, except for onions and sweetpotatoes. And more tender vegetables will be coming to market unless the weather is unfavorable. Prices of fresh vegetables have gone up seasonally in recent weeks and a further rise is likely

That's all the news of vegetables. Now here's an item about dairy products. Butter, cheese and other dairy products will be more expensive than they were last winter and spring even though supplies of these foods will be larger. More milk is predicted for this winter and spring, and more milk usually means more butter and cheese. But people have more money to spend for food. And that rise in income

offsets the effect of larger supplies of dairy products. The wholesale prices of butter have gone up 4 to 5 cents a pound during the past 2 months, and the price will go up farther this month. Butter prices generally reach their high point in December and then go down during the first 6 months of the year.

Now one item about that good winter fruit, the cranberry. The news still is: Fewer cranberries than last year.

That's all the food news for today except for a review of the surplus foods now on the official list. All foods designated as "surplus" for disposal under the Food Stamp Plan should be selling at reasonable prices generally. Here's the surplus list as it came out on November 15. Eighteen different foods are on this list: Irish potatoes, onions, cabbage, apples, pears, oranges, grapefruit, dried prunes, raisins, dried beans, butter, eggs, pork products including lard, corn meal, hominy grits, rice, wheat flour, and whole wheat or Graham flour.

That concludes the list of surplus foods. In a couple of weeks more food tips will be coming in from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

